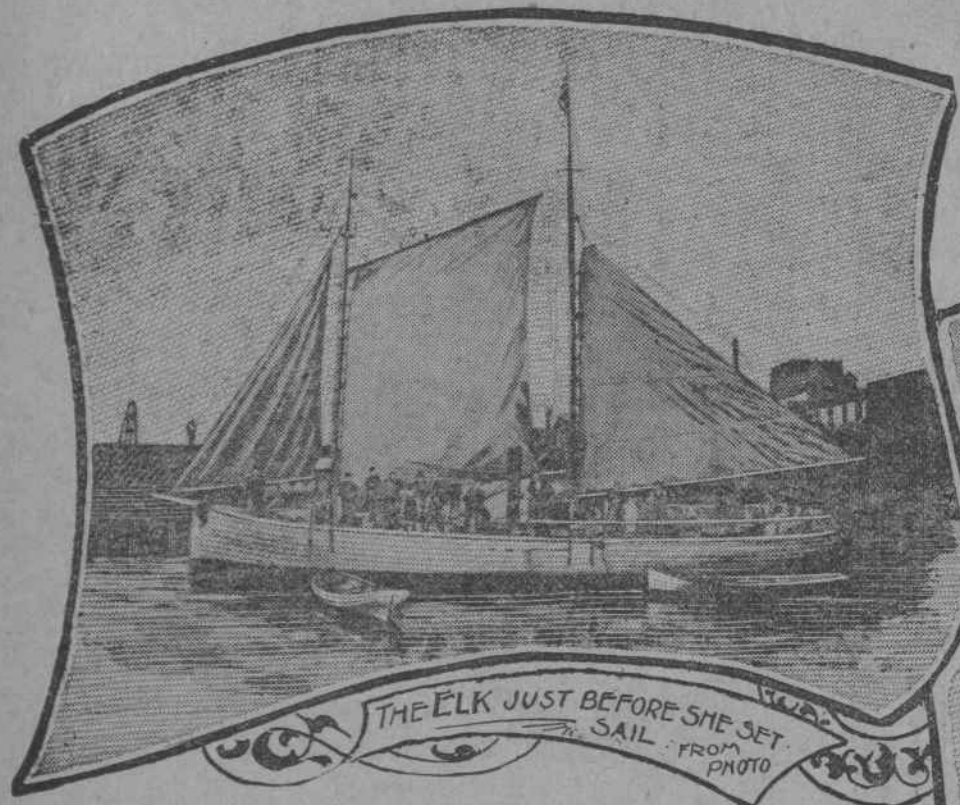


# WOMAN Faces In Its Most Terrible DEATH. Only Survivor of Party of KLONDIKE. Forms the Arctic 13 Searching for a New

*Mrs. Bens Outlives Husband and Eleven Strong Men  
and Brings Back This Feaful  
Story of Suffering.*



THE ELK JUST BEFORE SHE SET  
SAIL FROM PHOTO

**M**RS. HARMON W. BENS, who has just returned from Alaska to Seattle, has had probably the most tragic experience of any woman who has ever been to the Arctic gold fields.

A year ago she started with her husband, Captain Bens, and a party of gold seekers on the schooner Elk, from Puget Sound for some new gold "diggings" of supposed fabulous richness on the Mackenzie River beyond the Klondike.

But famine, scurvy, Arctic cold and darkness overtook them. One by one the strong men fell victims to disease and hardship and died. Mrs. Bens, frail and weak with wonderful strength of mind, nursed each in turn until her husband, Captain Bens, was the one man left. Finally he died of the slow poison of scurvy, and Mrs. Bens was left alone in a wilderness of darkness and snow and cold.

How she was rescued, what her anguish of mind and body was and how she has come back to civilization to begin life again after dying a hundred deaths, as she says, is told in her own words, which were written a week ago for the Sunday Journal in Seattle.

*How I Nursed and Buried My Husband and Eleven Men in the  
Alaskan Gold Fields, and as the Sole Survivor Was  
Rescued to Tell This Tragic Story.*

BY MRS. HARMON W. BENS.

**M**Y husband believed that gold could be found on the Mackenzie River or on some of the islands in the Arctic Ocean.

He planned an extensive prospecting voyage, and without trouble interested a number of strong young men whom he met at Port Townsend.

He had maps of the district he intended to visit, and had received information of several rich Mackenzie River bars from an old Hudson Bay trapper.

Captain Bens commenced work on the steam schooner Elk No. 1 at Port Townsend early in '98, having come from Bay City, Mich., en route for St. Michael. He was accompanied by James Hutton and Frank Calder.

My husband had considerable money with him, the savings of years of hard and dangerous toil as a master of barges and schooners on the Great Lakes. He superintended the work of construction and soon a stanch craft was launched.

A small engine and propelling machinery were put in and a schooner rig fitted up. The Elk was a peculiar looking craft and attracted much attention on the Seattle water front, where the vessel was tied up for some time. She was just large enough to carry two years' provisions for a party of seventeen. Late in May the schooner sailed away.

Calling at St. Michael, we heard that rich discoveries had been made on the various rivers running into Kotzebue Sound. A rush to that unknown country was under way at the time, and we decided to abandon our expedition to the Arctic and try our luck in Kotzebue.

Anchoring in the Sound, four of the crew were picked by lot to stay with the schooner. The remaining thirteen, under direction of Captain Bens and Captain Smith, started up the Sellwicks River. We visited several alleged diggings, but, like every one else lured to the district, found nothing but colors. We spent several months prospecting over the Kotzebue country.

Owing to inexperience, we had not chosen the right provisions, and as no fresh meat or vegetables could be secured, scurvy finally made its appearance. Dr. Vetter did his best to check the disease, but as he was compelled to work without medicine his task was a hard one. Several of the party died of the dread disease and were buried near the camp on the Sellwicks.

Captain Bens had made up his mind to return to the schooner and finish the winter on board, when the news came across the divide from the headquarters of the Koyukuk that gold had been found there.

We should have realized that we were in no condition to make the difficult trip of 300 miles, but the desire for gold overrode judgment, and not one wanted to turn back. Those sick with scurvy were willing to go on, in the hope of getting relief in the new diggings. No one dreamed of the fate that was in store for them, or that the trip we

"SQUASH COURT" is the fad of the hour.

All the younger set revel in the new sport.

It is played indoors and is somewhat similar to handball.

The old bowling alley in the Casino has been converted into the new court.

The floor is pine wood, a light, delicate yellow in color, very highly polished.

The walls are painted a brilliant cherry color.

There is a division in the walls extending all about at a distance of probably five feet from the floor.

The upper half is painted about three shades darker than the lower half.

We were about to take would be the last for all but one—and that one a woman.

We had been assured that game was abundant all the way, so did not fear starvation; and, although we had no dogs, we believed that we could pull sleds over the soft snow with sufficient supplies for the trip. All unnecessary camp luggage was abandoned and the start up the Sellwicks River commenced.

The men were weaker than they thought and made but poor progress up the stream. Several graves were left behind before the Tegravawick River was reached. Scurvy was rapidly thinning our ranks.

The unfortunates might have recovered had they remained in camp and taken care of themselves, but on the trail this was impossible. I did what I could to nurse them, but it was little enough that I could do.

The ascent of the Tegravawick River was even more difficult. The trail was one of graves—pale Arctic graves barely under the surface of the snow.

A few stones and a log or two would be rolled on top to prevent wild beasts from devouring the dead. A smooth slab of wood with the name pencilled on was the only gravestone possible.

As the men in the party became fewer the bodies were barely put under the snow, for it was necessary to husband strength and grave-digging was hard work.

When the head of the Tegravawick was reached it became necessary to cross from the watershed of the Kotzebue to that of the Koyukuk. To do this it was necessary to pass over two low divides.

While on this divide an Arctic blizzard swooped down upon us and completed the work of death that scurvy, starvation and exposure had begun.

The remaining five men were frozen in

camp or on the trail, and when the last divide was crossed only my husband and myself were alive.

My poor husband was a very sick man by this time. He had done his best to bring his party through, and had worked early and late.

I made a camp on the snow-covered banks of the Huskunkulna River and tried to fix things as comfortably as possible for him. He was badly frozen, and evidences of scurvy were plain.

His face was haggard and sunken, but a full beard hid this somewhat.

He realized that this was his last camp,

but did his best to cheer me up and to persuade me to push on alone to the Koyukuk, where the miners would assist me out of the country.

But I would not leave him. For nearly twelve weeks I hovered over him constantly.

On the morning of May 10 he breathed a farewell to me, and I was alone in my grief, with no human voice to speak one word of comfort.

Only a woman can realize my terrible position. I knew not how many miles I might be from human aid.

I marvelled why and how I had been

spared while those twelve men perished.

I was too weak to dig my husband's grave; yet the thought of his body lying in that wretched tent, a prey to wild beasts filled me with anguish.

To stay there was to die or become crazed.

I knew that the river would lead me to Koyukuk, but the distance was uncertain. I resolved to go on.

One can die but once, it is said; yet it seemed to me that I had already died a hundred deaths.

Slowly I "mushed" along the trail. The sun shone bright after the terrible blizzard,

but it made the trail soft and hard to travel.

An occasional print of moose or caribou crossed the river and gave the only evidence of life in that barren land of snow and ice. Mile after mile I counted until nine separated me from the camp of death.

It was almost night, and I believed my hours were numbered. I wondered how long it would take me to die.

I had begun to look forward to death with something akin to joy. I wondered if our bodies would ever be found.

Reaching a place slightly protected from the night wind, I was about to lie down for

a sleep that would know no waking.

Then out of the terrible stillness sounded the bark of a dog.

Its suddenness frightened me.

Looking closer into the dusk ahead, I saw smoke rising from the head of a gully.

I cried out in joy and surprise.

A gruff "hello" came answering back.

Help had come at last!

Several prospectors had been up the river from the Koyukuk and gone into camp for the night after a hard day's travel.

They were Charles Grant, of Maine, and Messrs. Hansen and Johnson, of Seattle. They came to me at once and took me to their camp.

The first warm food I had eaten in several days was given me. I told them of my husband's body lying uncovered at the head of the creek.

They promised to bury it, and I fell asleep utterly exhausted.

The next morning two of the miners went back and buried Captain Bens's body.

They cut some fir saplings which they placed in the ground, and on it built a bed of fir boughs. On this they placed a robe, on which the remains were laid, covering them over with another robe and more fir boughs.

They carved a square and compass on one end of the crude bier and on the other they carved a Maltese cross, the emblem of the Knights Templars, and his initials, "H. W. B." This was done so the remains could be identified if found.

They brought back what camp effects we had carried across the summit. That afternoon we started for Peavy, and I was well taken care of until the river broke.

Then I left Peavy in a row boat in charge of a Koyukuk prospector who was to bring me out. After floating a short distance down the river we were overtaken by the steam scow William B. Allison.

Captain Allen gladly took me on board and brought me to Nulato, where I was transferred to one of the North American Transportation and Trading Company's boats. On this I arrived at St. Michael.

Here Mrs. J. J. Healy at once interested herself in me, and her goodness was that of a ministering angel. A subscription was taken up to bring me to Seattle.

Those of the Elk No. 1 crew who perished, besides Captain Bens, were Dr. Vetter, Seranton, Pa.; James Hutton, Bay City, Mich.; Joe Reinhardt, Milwaukee, Wis.; Frank Calder, Bay City, Mich.; Captain Charles Smith, Port Hadlock, Wash.; John Stonehouse, Coupeville, Wash.; Earl Plummer, Port Townsend, Wash.; Duncan McCull, Chicago, Ill.; Peter Johnson, sailor, San Francisco, and two sailors whose names I don't recall.

I have since learned that the four men left on the schooner have all died from scurvy.

Now I am trying to banish the fearful nightmare of the long Arctic night from which I have emerged and begin life over again in the more kindly warmth and light of civilization.



THE ORIGINAL BENS PARTY  
OF ARGONAUTS  
FROM PHOTO  
BY WILDE  
SEATTLE



MRS. BENS  
THE HEROINE

## "Squash Court," THE NEW SOCIETY GAME—HOW IT IS PLAYED, WHO INVENTED IT AND WHO PLAYS IT —at Newport.

"SQUASH COURT" is the fad of the hour.

All the younger set revel in the new sport.

It is played indoors and is somewhat similar to handball.

The old bowling alley in the Casino has been converted into the new court.

The floor is pine wood, a light, delicate yellow in color, very highly polished.

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There is a division in the walls extending all about at a distance of probably five feet from the floor.

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The balls used are medium-sized rubber—in fact, the same kind of balls we've grown familiar with in the formerly fashionable game of lawn tennis.

The racket used in squash court is a larger, more intricately executed tennis racket than has been seen before.

The object of the game is to keep the ball continually hitting a specified portion of the upper division on the wall without ever allowing it to fall to the floor.

The exercise is violent and fine as an all around athletic developer.

The game was evolved from the old English "fives," and Mr. Payne Whitney is said to have adapted it to its present form.

The game is fifteen points.

The court is twenty-five feet wide by fifteen long.

The ceiling is high and the court is ventilated by a long line of narrow windows, not unlike the miniature door at the top of a railway car.

The squash court is hired by the hour. In an hour two or three games can very easily be played.

Squash court is the novelty of the year in Newport.

Every one has begun to play it.

The game is one so easily learned that two or three trials gives the player a taste of the interest it will afterward excite.

Once a devotee of squash court, one is

always interested, whether as a participant or onlooker.

Miss Elsie French and Miss Marion Fish frequently play a game together.

Miss French wears a white duck skirt and a blouse of the same material.

The skirt is made just to the shoe tops.

Miss Elsie's red gold hair is massed in a duffy pompadour beneath a Manila straw hat, tailor shape, trimmed with black velvet, duffly wired bow.

Miss Marion Fish, who next season will be presented, bears a marvellous resemblance to her sprightly mother, Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish. The mother and daughter dress so nearly alike when playing in

squash court that it takes an intimate

acquaintance or a very close observer to tell them apart.

Miss Fifi Potter drives up to the Casino in the jauntiest little red cart seen on Bellevue avenue. Her sturdy little pony stands quite alone on the crowded street, with the bridle thrown over his head, while little Miss Potter plays a game in

squash court.

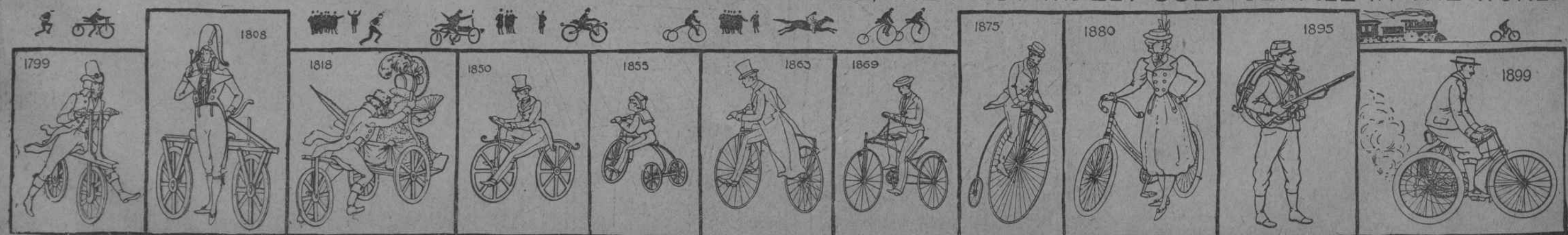
Miss Best and little Miss Vanderbilt play at some time during every day.

Payne Whitney is quite the hero of the hour.

To invent a new amusement in Newport is to be the envy of all men, for the time being at least.

At present squash court is the cynosure of all eyes in Newport.

## HOW A CENTURY OF INVENTION HAS PERFECTED THE BICYCLE, THE MOST WIDELY USED VEHICLE IN THE WORLD.



FROM A CRUDE MACHINE, CREATED IN THE BEGINNING TO AID ONE ONLY IN WALKING, IT HAS BECOME THE GREATEST RECORD BREAKER KNOWN, AND HAS WHIRLED OFF A MILE IN LESS THAN A MINUTE BEHIND A RAILROAD LOCOMOTIVE.